

SAFETY ALERT

Recent night vision device (NVD) training and supervisory failures at all levels have led to accidents and the loss of life. Analyses from the Safety Center's investigations of these accidents reveal that not all units and installations specify the proper use of NVDs.

Army regulation (AR) 600-55: *The Army Driver and Operator Standardization Program (Selection, Training, Testing, and Licensing)* is the governing doctrine for all driving operations. Chapter 8 addresses NVDs and paragraph 8-2b states: "Commands will establish speed limitations for all modes of driving with NVDs. In addition, commanders at all levels must understand the devices' limitations to conduct effective risk assessments." Appendix I of the AR outlines mandatory academic and driving tasks for NVDs, and the February 1996 issue of *Countermeasure* covers many of those limitations. The October 1997 and February 1999 issues of *Countermeasure* also address NVD safety. As a followup to these identified NVD issues, the February 2001 issue of *Countermeasure* will also focus on NVDs.

Commanders and safety personnel whose units use NVDs for driving must review and understand the requirements delineated in the AR. In addition, they should use TC 21-305-2: *Training Program for Night Vision Goggle Driving Operations* as the foundation of their NVD driver-training program. The TC provides good baseline training; however, commanders should also identify hazards unique to their location and review their own NVD operations policies and standing operating procedures to mitigate location-specific risks.

Questions that should be addressed include, but are not limited to the following:

- Do roads or tank trails on the installation allow two-way traffic?
- Are trails wide enough to allow two M-1s to pass without one pulling off the road?
- Is mixed traffic allowed (i.e., drivers with NVDs and drivers without NVDs)?
- If so, does the training program address the associated hazards?
- Do civilian and off-duty military hunters use the same roads as tactical vehicles driven by operators using NVDs?
- What steps has the installation taken to mitigate the risks associated with these hazards?

Commanders are key to successful NVD training and operations. Commander/leader involvement and careful mitigation of associated risks will prevent soldier injuries and fatalities.



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